

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 06178 100640Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /070 W
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R 091739Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2567
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 6178

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PDIP, PINT, PO, IS
SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE EMBASSY IN TEL AVIV STILL ON THE WAY

REF: LISBON 5821

SUMMARY: THE GOP REMAINS COMMITTED TO ESTABLISHING REPRESENTATION IN TEL AVIV AT THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL. IN LIGHT OF THE SHARP ARAB REACTION, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WOULD LIKE TO DEFER APPOINTMENT OF A GOP AMBASSADOR. BUT PS INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY RUI MATEUS SAYS SOARES'S COMMITMENT TO NAME AN AMBASSADOR BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR STILL STANDS. END SUMMARY.

1. PORTUGUESE DECISION REMAINS FIRM BUT WITH QUALIFICATIONS:
IN AUG 7 DISCUSSIONS WITH EMBOFF, FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICAN AND ASIAN AFFAIRS QUEIROS DE BARROS NOTED THAT:
-- THE GOP WILL HONOR ITS MAY 13, 1977 COMMITMENT TO NAME AN
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AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL BUT IT IS "EXTREMELY UNLIKELY" THAT THE APPOINTMENT WILL BE MADE THIS YEAR;
-- THE GOP HAS INFORMED THE ISRAELI EMBASSY HERE THAT THE GOP WILL GO AHEAD WITH PLANS TO OPEN AN EMBASSY IN TEL AVIV. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, NO REFERENCE TO TIMING;
-- THE SOARES DECISION TO EXCHANGE AMBASSADORS WAS MADE WITH NO REFERENCE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. DE BARROS DESCRIBED

THE PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION AS ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL.
IT WAS INTENDED TO IMPROVE ELECTION PROSPECTS FOR THE ISRAELI
LABOR PARTY AND WAS, TO SOME EXTENT, A RESPONSE TO PRESSURES FROM THE
SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, AND TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH SOARES'S
DEPARTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES;
-- IN APRIL THE GOI PRESSED THE SOARES GOVERNMENT TO NAME
AN AMBASSADOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT THE GOP FOREIGN
MINISTRY RESISTED AND THE MAY 13 COMMUNIQUE WENT NO FURTHER
THAN TO ANNOUNCE PORTUGUESE "INTENTIONS";
-- RECENT GOP ATTEMPTS TO JUSTIFY THE DECISION TO ARAB LEADERS
HAVE MET LIMITED SUCCESS AND THE FOREIGN OFFICE REMAINS
CONCERNED THAT GOP-GOI RELATIONS WILL BE DISCUSSED AT THE
SEPT 3 ARAB LEAGUE MEETING.

2. IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION WITH EMBOFF RUI MATEUS, PS
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY AND A CRITIC OF FOREIGN MINISTER
MEDEIROS FERREIRA, EXPLAINED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD
PROMISED YIGAL ALLON THAT A PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR WOULD BE
NAMED TO ISRAEL PRIOR TO THE END OF THIS YEAR. AS FAR AS
MATEUS WAS CONCERNED, THIS IS STILL THE CASE.
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